1995-2004 and recent assessment of ground water resources carried out jointly by the CGWB, NABARD and the State Government have indicated significant decline (more than 20 cm. per year) in ground water levels in some parts of 16 districts of the State of Punjab viz. Amritsar, Bhatinda, Faridkot, Fatehgarhsahib, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Mansa, Moga, Nawanshahar, Patiala, Ropar and Sangrur, which has caused hardship to farmers.

(c) "Water" being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Governments to formulate plans for augmenting water resources. The CGWB has, however, provided technical assistance to the State of Punjab to implement various schemes for augmentation of water resources. It has also implemented a Central Sector Scheme for Study of Recharge to Ground Water in the country during the VIII & Five Year Plans. Under this scheme, a total of 17 demonstrative projects on rain water harvesting and artificial recharge to ground water were taken up in Punjab, for which a fund of Rs. 361.92 lakh alongwith technical assistance was provided to the implementing Agencies of the State Government of Punjab.

Setting up of Central Water Management Body

732. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning a new Central Water Management Body to oversee water usage and entitlement, besides overseeing projects, treaties and disputes over water;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the status of the proposal; and

(c) whether this proposal is in response to a recent World Bank report citing demand for water in India to far exceed supplies by 2020?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Setting up of Water Regulatory Authority in Maharashtra

733. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have approved a proposal for setting up a Water Regulatory Authority for water management in Maharashtra; and

* (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The Government of Maharashtra has enacted the "Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority Act, 2005" which provides for the establishment of the Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority to regulate water resources within the State of Maharashtra, facilitate and ensure judicious, equitable and sustainable management, allocation and utilization of water resources, fix the rates for use of water for agriculture, industrial, drinking and other purposes, and matters connected herewith or incidental thereto.

Height of Mulla Periyar Dam

734. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Tamil Nadu is not being allowed to increase the storage height of water to 152 feet in stages at the Mulla Periyar Dam; and

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to protect the right of Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Central Government is aware that there is a dispute between the Governments of Tamil Nadu and Kerala regarding the water level in Mulla Periyar reservoir beyond 136 feet (41.45 metre).

(b) The Expert committee constituted by the Government of India in June, 2000 to study the safety of the Mulla Periyar dam and advise the Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources regarding raising of water level in Mulla Periyar Reservoir beyond 136 ft. (41.45 m) submitted its final report to the Government in March, 2001 and the same has been filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India as per their directions. Further action is dependent on the final judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.